



STATE OF NEVADA
STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION
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MINUTES

STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING

Richard H. Bryan Building
Video/Teleconference Meeting
901 S. Stewart Street, Carson City, NV 89701
February 24, 2022 at 1:00 PM

- **List of Acronyms attached as last page.**

Board Members Present:

Chairman Joe Sicking, Paradise-Sonoma Conservation District (CD);
Vice Chairman Commissioner Eric Rieman, Carson Valley CD;
Commissioner Meghan Brown, Nevada Department of Agriculture (NDA);
Commissioner Mark Damron, CD of Southern Nevada;
Commissioner Dr. Paul Meiman, University of Nevada, Reno College of Agriculture,
Biotechnology & Natural Resources and Cooperative Extension (CABNR/UNCE), Elko;
Commissioner Agee Smith, Northeast Elko CD, member at large;
Commissioner Doug Martin, Nevada Tahoe CD.
Commissioner Jake Tibbitts, Eureka CD.

Board Members Absent:

Commissioner Leland Wallace, Esmeralda CD.

Others Present:

Melany Aten, Nevada Conservation Districts Program (NCDP) Manager;
Jennifer Zampanti, Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (NDCNR),
Director's office;
Dominique Etchegoyhen, NDCNR Deputy Director;
Gerry Miller, NCDP Elko Conservation Staff Specialist;
Greg Ott, Deputy Attorney General (DAG);
Jon Paul Kiel, NDCNR, Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP), Bureau of Water
Quality Planning (BWQP);
Birgit Widegren, NDCNR, NDEP, BWQP;
Chuck Schembre, NDCNR, NDEP, BWQP;
Kelly McGowan, Nevada Sagebrush Ecosystem Program (SEP) Manager
Lorinda Wichman, Nye County Natural Resources Director;
Susan Abele, US for Fish and Wildlife Service, Partner Program;
Tony and Diane Stobiechi, Vya CD Supervisors;
Emily Walsh
Jordan Hosmer-Henner, State of Nevada Governor's office

1. Call to order, Determination of Quorum (For Possible Action)

- A. Chairman Sicking called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM.

B. A quorum was confirmed. **NO ACTION TAKEN**

2. Public Comments There were no public comments.

3. Review and consideration of approval of minutes (For Possible Action)

A. Commissioner Tibbitts provided grammar corrections, with no changes to substance. Ms. Aten agreed to changes in capitalization and names, no change in substance.

B. Commissioner Damron motioned to pass October 26, 2021 minutes as corrected.

Commissioner Smith seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. **ACTION TAKEN**

C. Commissioner Meiman commented on footer of December 10th minutes being outdated and page 3 item E has a misused word. Commissioner Meiman motioned to pass December 10, 2021 minutes as corrected. Commissioner Tibbitts seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. **ACTION TAKEN**

4. Discussion and Approval to release the Sage Grouse Request for Proposal (RFP) (For Possible Action)

A. Discussion: Commissioner Tibbitts had minor suggestions for the RFP. Ms. Aten received the suggested changes and posted them for the meeting.

B. Commissioner Smith motioned to accept the amendments to the application as corrected. Commissioners Rieman and Meiman seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. Commissioner Brown excuses herself for conflicting meeting.

C. Commissioner Tibbitts asked Ms. Aten whether a formal motion is needed to release the RFP. Ms. Aten agrees and plans to release the RFP to applicants March 1-April 15th. Meeting planned with SETT to review the applicants in the week following the April deadline. Would like to meet with the SCC to review after that. Commissioner Tibbitts motioned to release the RFP based on the revisions outlined with the dates as Ms. Aten outlined. Commissioner Martin seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. **ACTION TAKEN**

Commissioner Smith asks Ms. Aten to confirm timeline for RFP. April 18th-22nd for review with SETT and SCC April 25th -29th or the week after to complete, was confirmed by Ms. Aten. Funding to applicants will be distributed within the fiscal year.

Commissioner Martin asked if RFP could be discussed with CD's to prepare them for the release. Chairman Sicking agrees to that. March 1st is confirmed for release by Ms. Aten.

5. Presentation by Bureau of Water Quality Planning regarding the rewrite of the States' Best Management Practice (BMP) handbook in relation to AB 146. Presented by NDEP staff: Jon Paul Kiel (For Discussion) Meeting materials provided

A. Information on the BMP handbook updates, timelines and the SCC required involvement. (NAC445A.336)

B. Jon Paul Kiel introduced Birgit Widegren and Chuck Schembre of NDCNR, NDEP, BWQP. Updates are being made for review by the SCC, for adoption by the State Environmental Commission (SEC). At this time, efforts are moving forward with updates to the handbook, last updated in 1994. Interim measures have been implemented to inform the public and others of good BMP's to be employed with respective projects. AB 146 passed in Legislature last session which deals with the state doing a better job with diffuse sources of pollution. Action items in AB 146 can be updated in the BMP's, particularly subsections (B) (C) (D) regarding identifying major categories of diffuse pollution.

C. Mr. Kiel commented that 125 persons and entities have been identified that can be involved with the update of the BMP handbook. They can be invited to a scoping meeting to get input from these stakeholders to get a better idea of how to move forward with updating the document. There will be a stakeholder working group and a technical advisory group established to help more specifically with the BMP's described in the handbook. Schedule of task has been prepared, with May of 2023 being the completion date. Work on handbook

being done at staff level with no funding yet to fund contractors or consultants. Would like to ultimately have the handbook in digital form instead of paper. SEC and SCC will be included as the updates on the project become available.

Commissioner Martin asked Mr. Kiel about 150 outreach people and small working group and whether representatives from the Conservation Commission will be included in smaller working group. Mr. Kiel has 125 folks identified from different bodies like the CD's and intends to invite them to the upcoming scoping meeting to discuss the formation of a general working group and a smaller working group and a smaller technical advisory group. May be other groups to match with BMP categories. Will provide updates to SCC.

6. Discussion regarding Governor's Appointments to the SCC. NRS 548.125 (For Possible Action)

A. Chairman Sicking requested letter drafted to Governor regarding the nine names submitted by NvACD for the three seats open for SCC appointment. Mr. Etchegoyhen recaps that, as provided by statute, the NvACD has provided a list of names to the Governor for consideration for the three vacant seats, one being an at large position. Ms. Aten commented that the delay of appointment since April 28th of 2021 has been due to staffing changes that have occurred since then. Suggested sending a letter with a copy of the list and/or asking NvACD to contact Governor's office for an update. Commissioner Tibbitts refers to Jordan Hosmer-Henner from the Governor's office. Asked whether Mr. Hosmer-Henner can see that the appointments move forward as soon as possible. Commissioner Smith agreed with Jake.

B. Commissioner Smith confirmed that one incumbent is on list plus two others for vacant seats. Commissioner Martin clarified that incumbents serve until new appointment. Wanted to clarify whether the statute is clear that the appointments must come from the provided list. Chairman Sicking confirmed that the Governor must choose from the provided list per NRS 548.125 #4. Commissioner Smith agreed with Commissioner Tibbitts that no letter is needed to send to Governor regarding appointment to seats. Mr. Hosmer-Henner replied to inquiries and will bring up the issue with the Chief of Staff and asked Ms. Aten for a copy of the NvACD letter of recommendations. Ms. Aten will send a copy to him of the email with the letter. Decision made to not send Governor a reminder letter. **No Action Taken**

Mr. Etchegoyhen departs meeting. Commissioner Martin also departs meeting and there is still a quorum.

7. Updates from Agencies and Partners (For Possible Action)

A. Nevada Department of Agriculture: Commissioner Brown updated after return to meeting. Nevada native seed forum coming up on March 23rd Fallon. In person and virtual meeting at Fallon Convention Center. Will cover marketing production, seed cleaning, and contracting related to more of the Federal side of contracting. Presented to SEC to get position filled. Would like Nevada AG from sagebrush system technical team help participate in meetings. Director was in Washington D.C. meeting with leadership related to infrastructure funds to enhance projects. Noxious weed coordinator Jake Dick is working on early detection and rapid response state plan. Working with CD's, cooperative weed management, Weed districts, and partners in regional areas to set up local early response/rapid response groups.

B. University of Nevada Reno CABNR/UNCE: Commissioner Meiman commented that a summary was sent for summit next month. Commented that if the summit ends with a finding that a policy center at UNR is a good idea, the commission may be asked for a letter of support. No questions.

C. Natural Resource Conservation Service: Ms. Aten spoke to Ray Dotson, NRCS State Conservationist about attending the next meeting. He gave a presentation for drought

workshops with NDWR and NDEP and Ms. Aten asked that he give the same presentation at the next SCC meeting. He or Jim Gifford will attend the next meeting.

D. DCNR: Ms. Aten would like to hire a Western Region staff person once office space is negotiated. Working with NvACD and Lauren Williams in Ely to research grants to staff someone under NDCNR to assist with southern CD's. Researching what capacity grants are available for three years. Working on Sage Grouse grant program and template update for reports for CD's proposed annual work plan.

E. Sagebrush Ecosystem Program/Sagebrush Ecosystem Technical Team: Kelly McGowan commented that they are the cooperating agency on the redo for the Sage Grouse land use plans and the sagebrush focal area plan that calls for withdrawals within the sagebrush focal area. Mitigation program in place. Commissioner Sicking asked about executive order for sagebrush habitat conservation framework. Mr. Hosmer-Henner commented that executive order is to get the appropriate level of funds.

F. NvACD: No update

G. All others: Susan Abele, US for Fish and Wildlife Reno, commented that agency is slated to receive funding from the bipartisan infrastructure law for sagebrush ecosystem restoration. Initiated conversations with partners to discuss opportunities and projects for that funding. Priorities are projects that address fire and invasives, conifer encroachment, and enhancing wet meadows and riparian areas.

Ms. Aten asked whether this will be an application process or should interested parties get in touch with her. Mrs. Abele asked they get in touch with her directly. An RFP with deadline will not be done. Expecting a lot of potential projects for the five years of funding.

Commissioner Brown returned to the meeting. See update for 7A.

8. Follow up on Assembly Joint Resolution Number 2 (AJR2) letter to State regarding funding mechanisms for CDs to use and meet the requirements outlined in the resolution. (For Possible Action)

Commissioner Tibbetts reviewed AJR2. Attended meeting with National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) and received update on progress of farm bill and other initiatives related to soil health proposals. Steve Keleti is working with NACD tracking soil health measures across the nation and tracking various legislative proposals and working with states.

Agriculture Resilience Act is bill refiled this session. Senator Martin Heinrich is the sponsor in the Senate of bill to funnel Federal resources to states that have developed soil health programs and have soil health plans in place. Still need letter put together with Ms. Aten for partner agencies.

Commissioner Meiman commented on the email received from Mr. Keleti regarding the language of the bills requiring a match of Federal funding and what percentage they are looking for. **No action taken.**

9. Commissioner items (For Discussion only)

A. None.

10. Next Commission Meeting (For Possible Action)

A. Future agenda items:

1. Ms. Aten will work with SET on reviewing applicants for Sage Grouse grant and asked for an SCC meeting to review applicants also. Ms. Aten requested a meeting for the last week in April or first week in May.

2. Only other thing on agenda will be Ray Dotson with NRCS with drought funding review. Commissioner Damron asked whether separate meeting for applicants and SCC is needed. Chairman Sicking and Ms. Aten commented that one meeting will suffice. Ms. Aten will schedule meeting after meeting with SETT. Asked that any dates that are not acceptable be sent to her.
3. Commissioner Tibbitts commented that the Sage Grouse packet states SCC will meet in April and must be amended if the meeting is in May. Chairman Sicking agreed.

11. Public comments-None

Public comment may be made on any issue, provided such comment is limited to areas relevant to and within the authority of the State Conservation Commission. Public comment is limited to 3 minutes per person. No action will be taken on any item raised during public comment that is not already on the agenda. At the discretion of the Chair, public comment may be received prior to action on individual agenda items.

12. Adjournment (For Possible Action)

- A. **Motion to adjourn:** Meeting adjourned 2:46 PM.